

Statement of Helena Gorski
Appropriations Committee
February 18, 2016

Esteemed representatives of the Appropriations Committee, my name is Helena Gorski, I live in Wethersfield. I'm the parent and conservator of an adult with a psychiatric disability. My son would be homeless today were it not for the legal representation he received from Connecticut Legal Rights Project. These people are experienced in the courts unlike people with mental health issues and they have a remarkable ability to explain legal terms in a way that clients and their families can understand.

My son was living in an apartment in Newington. The landlord blamed my son and tried to evict him for bringing bedbugs to the building, even though there was a long history of bedbug treatments in the complex prior to my son's tenancy. There was something quite shady about the management of this property. Every few months, the landlord would ask me for more money other than the rent and would threaten to evict if I as his conservator didn't pay it. I didn't understand the charges and they approach me about more money every few months. These funds were not in the lease. Multiple times, they tried to evict my son and I would never receive notice until it was nearly too late. Luckily the court referred us to Connecticut Legal Rights Project.

Their representation was unbelievable. I cannot imagine having to navigate the court system on my own, never mind my son having to do it and meet with the landlord's bullying attorney. They negotiated to keep my son in his apartment for five and a half months until we could find a new home for him that was suitable.

I understand that you are faced with many difficult choices in this year's budget, but you must keep core services- homelessness prevention via legal representation of the most vulnerable and discriminated people in our state.